



## CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

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## **California High-Speed Rail Authority Reviews Spanish Safety Record**

***Experts Say Bullet Trains Routinely Operate Alongside Conventional Freight Rail***

**Los Angeles** – Spanish National Railways Consortia officials today affirmed the safety record of high-speed trains, noting that they have operated in the same corridors as conventional freight trains, running parallel to each other – and in some instances crossing each other – efficiently and with no accidents for decades.

Representatives of high-speed-train-builder Talgo and of Renfe, Spain's national rail system operators, stressed the safety record in a presentation to members of the California High-Speed Rail Authority, the agency charged with building a 220-mile-per-hour train system linking California's major cities.

The comments by Spanish officials came less than a week after a Union Pacific Railroad spokesman raised questions about the safety of introducing a high-speed train in the same corridor as conventional trains.

"Today's comments from Spanish experts demonstrate that real world experience proves the safety of high-speed trains," said Mehdi Morshed, executive director of the California High-Speed Rail Authority. "High-speed passenger trains and freight rail can coexist safely and efficiently."

In other board action today, finance consultants from the Infrastructure Management Group and Lehman Brothers said their studies are showing strong interest in the project from leading public and private sector investors with international rail project experience. According to their analysis of the Request for Expression of Interest, construction firms, equipment manufacturing companies and financial institutions are interested in potential partnerships to help design, build, operate and maintain California's high-speed train service.

Los Angeles City Councilmember Tom LaBonge and a representative for Los Angeles County Supervisor Michael Antonovich told the rail authority board that the high-speed train system is a critical part of the solution to Southern California's future transportation needs.

The Authority also said the public comment period on the environmental impact study and report for the Bay Area to Central Valley segment of the statewide train system will continue at a meeting of the Authority board on July 8. On July 9 in San Francisco, the Authority board will review and make a final decision on the connection route linking the Central Valley and the Bay Area via Pacheco Pass. The Board's decision also will initiate work on determining appropriate improvements to the commuter rail corridor through the Altamont Pass.

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